

RICKS' FOUNDRY
Miller Avenue off South Mt. Vernon Street
Uniontown
Fayette County
Pennsylvania

HAER NO. PA-366

HAER
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

RICKS FOUNDRY

HAER No. PA-366

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Location: Miller Avenue off South Mt. Vernon Street, Uniontown, Fayette County, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: ca. 1900, 1928, ca. 1940

Fabricator: unknown

Present Owner: Thomas Ricks

Present Use: Machine Shop

Significance: Ricks manufactured the Covington coke puller, the most widely-used mechanical coke-drawing machine in the Connellsville Region.

Historian: Gray Fitzsimons

Project Information: In February, 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HAER undertook a comprehensive inventory of Fayette County to identify the region's surviving historic engineering works and industrial resources.

History

Ricks' Foundry was constructed ca. 1900 and has remained in the Ricks family since that time. The small foundry originally produced iron castings and completed finish work for the pressed-glass molds manufactured by Evans Mold and Machine Company which, ca. 1916, was located on South Beeson Avenue. In addition, the firm fabricated manholes and doors for coal shoots. In 1935, only three people were employed by the company; World War II gave the business a boost, however, and Ricks' Foundry manufactured the first 4 1/2" rocket warhead for the Allegheny Ballistics Company. As the wartime need for coke escalated, the old Frick coke works located several blocks south of the foundry was repaired and placed back in service. Ricks returned to his home town of Covington, Virginia, and purchased machinery from the Covington Machine Company to produce a coke-drawing machine. In addition, Ricks designed and produced new doors for the coke ovens and a steel vibrating screen for coal. Aluminum airplane parts for the TBV2 bombers were also fabricated at the plant during World War II. Until 1955, fifty people were employed by the company.

Description

Ricks' Foundry is situated on a terrace above Lick Creek in Uniontown. The creek passes between the buildings, and a railroad siding is associated with the foundry. The foundry is a one-and-one-half story building of common-bond red brick, which sits on a reinforced-concrete foundation that covers the original stone. The gable roof is covered by composition paper and has a monitor. Supported by steel trusses, the foundry walls contain arched multipane windows with double brick voussoirs. Originally constructed around 1900, the structure saw major repair after fire destroyed the roof in 1928. There is an addition to the rear of the building. Also of common-bond red brick, the pattern shop is two stories high and attached to the foundry. The shop has arched multipane double-hung sash windows with double brick voussoirs, and two sets of double wood-panel doors with triple voussoirs. The single-story machine shop is partially covered by a gable roof and partially by a flat roof, both with composition paper on top. Its windows are multipane, double-hung, and there is a one-story concrete-block addition at the rear, constructed ca. 1940 to house machinery for coke ovens. The complex also has a single-story, board-and-batten radiator shop and, built in 1947, a two-story, concrete-block office with a gable roof.

Sources

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Harrisburg: State Printer, 1935.

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Tenth Industrial Directory of Pennsylvania, 1941.
Harrisburg: State Printer, 1941.

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